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A LETTER

TO THE

*from
the author*

REV. ERNEST HAWKINS,

SECRETARY TO THE SOCIETY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF THE
GOSPEL IN FOREIGN PARTS,

ON

THE PRINCIPLES

OF

THE OPERATIONS OF THE SOCIETY,

ESPECIALLY WITH REGARD TO

EMIGRANTS.

BY LORD LYTTTELTON.

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A LETTER.

MY DEAR SIR,

THE feeling that has arisen in favour of a religious provision for Emigrants from this country during the time of their passage to the Colonies, appears to me to furnish a favourable opportunity for a further step upon that principle which the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel has of late always kept in view in its operations ; namely, that of gradually withdrawing aid from our dependencies in proportion as they become able to provide for their own spiritual needs, and of bestowing the bulk of its support partly on strictly Missionary operations, partly on the spiritual care of our Emigrants during the first stages of their emigration and settlement.

I can draw nothing but constant confirmation of this principle, both from further reflection on the case in general, and from the progressive development of the Colonial Church. Nothing can be in itself more unreasonable than that dependencies, which we hope to see, as far as possible, reproducing a complete image of the Mother Country in all their institutions, should be accustomed to look anywhere but to their own resources for the *permanent* support of their eccle-

siastical establishments ; and, on the other hand, the constant formation of new Colonial Dioceses calls, in the loudest manner, for the liberal application of the *sound* principle of operation on the part of the Society, by the giving a good *start*, so to speak, to those infant Dioceses, till they may be so methodized and consolidated as to be able to support their own institutions.

But it is obvious that, with respect to all our Colonies, the most important practical application of this principle is immediately connected with the subject mentioned in the outset of this paper. We encourage in every possible way, for the relief of this country, for their own benefit, and for that of the Colonies, the departure from its shores of vast bodies of Emigrants, and pour them into our North American and Australian Colonies. What these Colonies have a right to demand is, that concurrently with the progress of this mere human supply, we should send out both the men, in due numerical proportion, who are needed for its moral and spiritual care, and the means for their continuance in the Colony during those early stages of settlement, when the Emigrants are unable duly to provide these means for themselves.

This, however, is the most abstract way of stating the case, and without further explanation would only be applicable to a Colonial district when the first settlers go out to it from this country. In existing circumstances the Society is obliged to modify the strict application of the rule, partly by obligations which it has contracted, and by the existing circumstances of colonial society, partly by the habits of chronic depend-

ence on its funds which have been allowed to grow up, especially in the North American Colonies; but the principle itself is to be kept always steadily in view.

Now, if we divide our Colonial Empire into the three obvious classes of the North American, the West Indian, and the Australian Colonies, (to which last should be added Ceylon and the Cape of Good Hope,) it is easy to see that they, each of them, furnish a clear illustration of the manner in which our principle should be worked, both in its positive and its negative aspect.

A strong appeal is just now made on behalf of the West Indies, on account of the great depression under which they are labouring. But it is impossible to recognise this as an element in the question, which is that of the *permanent* principle of dealing with the spiritual exigencies of the Colonies. It must be assumed, that any such depression as should cause ancient and fully-established Colonial Governments to withdraw the support which they have long been in the habit of giving to any of the organic institutions of their country, will be of a temporary nature, and arising from removable causes; and though such a condition might furnish a ground for some temporary assistance from this country, it must only be looked upon as such, and not as arising from the operation of any normal principle.

This remark is made rather incidentally. Looking at the general principle laid down, it must be observed that, without adverting to slight exceptions, the West Indies receive no Emigrants from this country. Comparatively, at least, to other Colonies, they are not the

scene of Missionary labours. For the most part, they may be spoken of as *settled* Colonies. In the present view of the question, therefore, their case does not so prominently offer itself for consideration as that of other Colonies.

The North American Colonies, especially Canada, seem to present the question in various very strong, and at the same time very different lights. As a whole, they are, in all temporal respects, the most advanced of all our Colonies; the most remote from, and independent of, all real influence from this country. In this respect they make the strongest possible case for the operation of the principle, that they should be led to consider that in spiritual, no less than in temporal matters, they must more and more learn to walk alone.

Also, with regard to the actual condition of many of the districts in British North America, and many to which the aid of this Society is still extended, it cannot be doubted that they are, in fact, as well able to meet their obligation to support their Churches and Clergy as any district in England.

But most important facts are to be set on the other side.

In the first place, British North America is still the scene of extensive Missionary labours.

Secondly, there are many districts, and increasing in number, which are neither fully settled nor the scene of strictly Missionary work. These are well known among us as the unsettled or partly-settled districts, and I have stated them to be an appropriate destination for the *temporary* aid of this Society.

Lastly, and which is most important, British North America receives, and will continue to receive, many more Emigrants from this country than all the other Colonies put together.

I fear that I may appear to have somewhat digressed from the especial object of this letter, which is the religious provision for Emigrants. But it is evident with respect to British North America, that the question of the spiritual care of the Emigrants, and that of the unsettled districts, are very closely united, as it is in great measure from those Emigrants that the population of those districts is recruited in their progress towards complete settlement; and the two subjects may practically be considered together.

Looking, therefore, at the condition of British North America, I do not consider that the amount now given to those Colonies by the Society, large as it is, is excessive. But I think that, abstractedly speaking, its distribution is far from the best that could be adopted; and that, as far as circumstances will allow, it should be reformed on the very principle which is now brought forward, namely, that of spiritual provision for our Emigrants as such.

The Australian Colonies, while with respect to Missionary efforts they present a lesser amount of work to be done than some other of our possessions, furnish, both as to emigration from this country, and as to the principle of aiding from home our Colonies in their early stages of development, as urgent, and, at the same time, as encouraging and as hopeful a case as it is easy to imagine, for the attention of the Society.

The Australian emigration is small in amount compared with the North American ; but it is greatly increasing : it is more nearly ascertainable in amount beforehand ; and it is more under Government control. With the establishment of steam communication, it will receive a still greater stimulus ; and the capabilities of those countries are such, that the distance must, for an indefinite time to come, form the only check to the emigration to them from England ; a check of which the force will be liable to constant diminution, from the necessities of the Mother Country, combined with the improvements of science.

As to the second point adverted to—the principle of aiding Infant Colonies—nothing can be more obvious than the force of its application to these Colonies. The local circumstances of each of them show, in the strongest manner, that they are but at the dawn of a long and brilliant day of material prosperity. The very establishment of all of them, but one, is within the memory of young men of the present day. New South Wales is indeed of older date ; but the memory of its earlier days of shame and of error is passing away, and it may be said to have made a fresh beginning as a civilized country within a few years past.

Then, as to our more immediate subject, it is clear that in Australia, what have been called the “ organic filaments ” of a great ecclesiastical system are even now weaving, and are, of all others, the very materials which the care and the resources of a Society like ours should help to finish into a perfect work. And here, also, I believe that the rule which the present movement points to, namely, that the aid given

by the Society should be in proportion to the number of Emigrants from this country, will be found the soundest and the most adequate to the case that could be adopted.

Ceylon and the Cape, as new Dioceses, are both of them most appropriate fields for the exertions of the Society. But, as to the former there is no emigration, and it can hardly be considered to be fully established to the latter, they need not at present be further considered.

It seems to me, then, that, as far as circumstances will permit, an attempt should be made to regulate the aid given by the Society to North America and to Australia according to the amount of emigration from this country to those Colonies.

It has been already admitted that there are several modifying circumstances of the kind alluded to. But we may first begin by considering in what manner the Society might proceed, if it were entirely free to act; and then how that course requires to be qualified by existing conditions.

The outline of such a course would be this:—

First, to determine in what numerical proportion (nearly) it would be desirable that Clergymen should accompany bodies of Emigrants.

Next, to fix the amount of payment from the funds of the Society which such Clergymen should receive.

Next, to arrange the period during which the support of such Clergy should fall, in whole or in part, upon the Society, to be afterwards left to the Colony where they should be placed.

It must be observed, with respect to the first point, that there is no idea of anything so rigid and precise as the establishment of any *permanent* relation between the given Clergyman and the given number of Emigrants. All we should say is, that, in proportion as we replenish the Colony with the physical stock, we supply it also with the spiritual element; leaving it entirely to the Colonial authorities to deal as they will with what we thus supply.

The information requisite for these operations would be—

1st. The number of Emigrants that are likely to leave the kingdom for British North America, or Australia, in the course of the year.

2dly. The amount which the Society could afford to pay, as proposed.

3dly. The degree to which the Colonies would undertake to adopt and co-operate in this plan.

The first point cannot, of course, be ascertained positively or completely; but a nearer approximation may probably be made to it than might at first be supposed. It should first be remarked, that, for various reasons, some of which are very obvious, the emigration from the Irish ports to America must be left out of this consideration of the question. The English emigration to British North America may, then, be nearly estimated from the average of former years: the Australian likewise, with the additional advantage that it is almost entirely under the immediate superintendence of the Emigration Commissioners; for, in this question, it is hardly possible to take practical account of the *private* emigration to Australia.

On both points the Society could, at the beginning of each year, obtain sufficient information from the Land and Emigration Commissioners.

The second and third points must partly be considered together; that is to say, the amount which the Society could and ought to pay depends *partly* upon the degree to which the Colonies would be prepared to meet us with corresponding efforts on their part. But before we can make any overture to the Colonies on this point, we must arrive at some idea as to what we are ourselves, with reference to this country and our own resources, in a condition to undertake. This inquiry connects itself with those modifying circumstances to which I have already alluded, as restraining the action of the Society in the direction which, in the abstract, it might be most advisable to follow. The existing income of the Society is already, for the most part, pledged to certain payments. On this head I will only remark, first, that I hope the Society will, on every occasion of being released from obligations in British North America or Australia, bear in mind the principle which has been laid down, in respect of the sum thus set free; secondly, that I hope it will always be made a matter of as accurate calculation as possible, what amount of the Society's income is thus pledged by actual obligation, and what is not.

But there are other considerations besides those of the present income of the Society. The first is that which has been suggested, that a special effort should be made to raise funds for this specific object, the care of our Emigrants. On this I will remark further

hereafter ; only noting, at present, that it will be a *permanent* addition which will be required to the funds of the Society : for though, with regard to each body of Emigrants, the charge would be temporary, as there will be a constant succession of such bodies, the charge would practically be a perpetual one upon the Society.

In the next place, there is the question, whether any funds in aid of those of the Society could be obtained from any quarter, towards this particular object. It is probable that there might, from two sources : from the Emigration Commissioners, and from parties interested in promoting colonization. Indeed, I have reason to believe that the Commissioners, though they could not contribute anything under the form of stipend, would aid us to some extent in an equivalent manner, by lessening the cost of passage to the Emigrant Clergy.

The Society for Promoting Colonization might also, perhaps, be induced to meet the Society with some advance from their own funds towards the stipend of Clergymen who should devote themselves to the religious instruction of the Emigrants during the voyage.

It seems desirable that no time should be lost in opening and carrying on communications with the parties to whom I have referred. But if that be so, and, indeed, from the general circumstances of the case, those communications must be to some extent conditional. I apprehend they should be something of this kind :—The Society should desire to know, whether, in case it should be able from its own funds to appropriate

annually a given sum to the religious care of Emigrants from here to British North America or Australia, they would, in any manner, and to what extent, co-operate with the Society, upon principles such as the Society could approve.

Undoubtedly, the main dependence of the Society must be upon its own funds. I have put off the consideration of this point till now, wishing to view it in connexion with Mr. ——'s suggestion, which, to some extent, differs from mine.

Mr. —— proposes that an immediate effort should be made to raise a special fund in this country whereby the Society should undertake to send out Clergy in the emigrant ships, for the religious charge of the Emigrants, during their passage only : relying, first, on the positive good thus effected, even if nothing more is done ; secondly, on the hope that the influence thus brought to bear on the Emigrants will be continued upon them, and have practical effects on their own conduct and exertions in the Colony, even if the presence of the spiritual aid thus given is withdrawn from them at the end of the voyage ; thirdly, on the probability that, in some manner or other, many of the Clergy thus accompanying Emigrants will be induced and enabled not to return, but to remain in the Colony, together with those whom they have accompanied.

On this plan I have to remark first, that, like the other one, for its due success it must not be looked on as a temporary but as a permanent one ; and therein as different from what is ordinarily understood as the object of a Special Fund. But still the cessation or

interruption of this plan would be attended with less inconvenience than in the other case.

Secondly, it appears to be mainly, if not solely, adapted to the Australian emigration. It could hardly be worked except in connexion with a definite number of emigrant ships, and ships of regulated dimensions and accommodation. Both these conditions apply accurately to the Government emigration to Australia, but not to that to America.

Moreover, the main part of the plan is that which contemplates a lasting effect on the Emigrants through their prolonged intercourse with the Clergyman. This is true with regard to the four or five months of the voyage to Australia, but can hardly be said of the four or five weeks of that to America.

I cannot but feel a strong impression that this plan is a defective one, and that the Society ought not to be contented with it. But I am prepared to agree to its being acted upon, and even strongly to contend for it, for this reason:—it seems important that some public movement on the part of the Society should now be made on this question. My plan may be set on foot at once, but the conditions of it will not admit of anything in the nature of a public demonstration for a considerable time to come. Mr. ——'s plan, as far as it goes, may be acted upon completely and publicly at once. It depends wholly upon resources to be obtained at home. Moreover, it will not, in any degree, interfere with the adoption and the progress of the other plan, of which, indeed, it may rather be looked upon as a beginning and a part.

Assuming, therefore, that Mr. ——'s proposition is

at once adopted, and reserving, in respect of it, the question of the American emigration, on which I desire some further explanation, it seems to me that the practical course to be followed is this :—

1. That a public appeal be made, in the same manner as has previously been done, or in any other better one that may be devised, for contributions, to be applied by the Society to sending out Clergymen in emigrant ships.

2. That communications be opened with the Bishops and other authorities in the North American and Australian Dioceses, with the Land and Emigration Commissioners, and with the Colonization Society, of the nature above described, with a view to the organization of a permanent system of support to the Colonial Churches on the part of the Society, in proportion to the emigration from this country to the Colonies.

I am,

Yours very truly,

LYTTLETON.

Feb. 9, 1849.

